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South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs

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NATIONAL GUARD RELEASED FROM LEVEE PATROLS

South Dakota National Guard members who have been patrolling emergency levees since Missouri River flooding began in late spring have been released from that duty.

The final 11 Guard members who have been providing levee security in the Pierre and Fort Pierre area were demobilized on Thursday, Aug. 25. Another 18 soldiers from the Pierre-Fort Pierre mission were released on Wednesday.

Demobilization of Guard members on levee patrol in the Dakota Dunes area of Union County could occur in the next several days. Currently, 21 Guard members are providing levee security and another 31 members are on a Quick Reaction Force in Union County. Their status and possible demobilization is being assessed as the water goes off the levees.

"Among many other responsibilities during this record flooding event, National Guard members have performed an essential mission of patrolling levees that protected riverside communities," Jones said. "As the Corps of Engineers continues to reduce releases from the Missouri River reservoirs, flood waters are dropping and will soon be off the levees. Until that time, however, residents in those areas should remain vigilant and stay away from the levees until the river no longer poses a danger."

At the height of the response to the Missouri River flooding, some 1,300 National Guard men and women were on duty.

"Much was asked of our Soldiers and Airmen, but much was asked of every citizen during this flood fight," said Maj. Gen. Timothy Reisch, adjutant general of the South Dakota National Guard. "We have been together every step of the way. The men and women of the National Guard have been proud to be part of the fight. I know each of them joins me in thanking employers, family members and all other South Dakotans for the support we received."



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VSO BENEFIT SCHOOL HELD IN PIERRE LEADERS RECOGNIZED

As per SDCL 33A-1-26, the Department of Veterans Affairs provides annual training for all County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers in South Dakota. This year's annual Veterans Benefits School was held in Pierre on August 29-31, and focused on: pension, healthcare, claims processing, homelessness, education benefits, on-the-job training, apprenticeship programs, TRICARE, foster care, adaptive housing, hospice, services for the blind and the State Veterans Home. The Department will also be offering additional training later this year when they host mini conferences at four locations.

Cited for their strong dedication to serving veterans and their families, veteran service officers and Department staff were recognized at an awards program held Monday evening during the school. Steve Harding, Deputy Secretary, and Charles Claussen, Director, showcased each of the recipients accomplishments and presented them with their honors.

Ken Irwin, Custer County Veterans Service Officer, received the Jim Melgaard Award that distinguished him as the 2011 Veterans Service Officer of the Year.

Jerry Lolley, Meade County Veterans Service Officer, was awarded the 2011 Robert Lindblad Award that distinguished him for excellence in outreach.

Jesse Krause, Grant County Veterans Service Officer, was presented the 2011 Les Mord Award that distinguished him for excellence in education.

Aaron Pollard, Supervisor for the Department's Claim Office in Sioux Falls, was awarded the 2011 Glenn Green Advocacy Award.

Robert Gill, Leroy Freimark and Fred Cozad were recognized by the County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers Association for their respective years of service to South Dakota's veterans.

The men and women honored at this year's conference exemplify the commitment and dedication that the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs and the County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers provide to our South Dakota veterans and their families each and every day.



452ND SOLDIERS RETURN HOME FROM MIDDLE EAST

All the members of the U.S. Army Reserve's 452nd Ordnance Co. are now back home on South Dakota soil, after spending a year in Kuwait and Iraq. The last nine soldiers arrived by bus in the northern South Dakota city of Aberdeen on Monday afternoon of this week.

Earlier in the day, buses dropped off other soldiers in cities in Minnesota, Nebraska and Missouri. A few other members of the unit flew home. About 50 members of the Aberdeen-based 452nd returned to that city in late July. Five other soldiers with medical conditions returned home about the same time.

A formal welcome home for the 452nd is set for Jan. 7 at the Dakota Event Center in Aberdeen.

LAST CHAPTER FOR THE SOUTH DAKOTA HONOR FLIGHT BOOK

Several activities will be held across the state on Monday, September 12, to mark the conclusion of the Honor Flight South Dakota project.

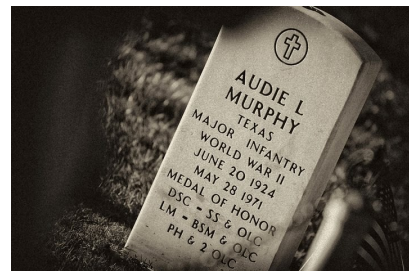
Events will include several community open houses and receptions to honor veterans and at 7:00 pm (CT), KELO-Land Television will broadcast a one hour special program about the Honor Flights from South Dakota. In conjunction with the program, there will be several open house events throughout the state.

The Sioux Falls open house will be held September 12, in Sioux Falls at the Sanford Research Center (2301 E. 60th Street, N) starting at 5:30 pm. The Rapid City open house will be held at the T.R.E.A. Headquarters (1981 East Center Street) starting at 5:00 pm.

Also, several veterans service organization around the state are planning open houses in their respective communities.

The broadcast and open house events will be the finale for the Honor Flight South Dakota program. Over the past four years, volunteers organized a state-wide Honor Flight South Dakota "Hub" in conjunction with the national Honor Flight Network; formed an all-volunteer non-profit tax-exempt organization to manage the program; received major support from hundreds of volunteers and every veterans service organization across the state and charter sponsors and coordinated a dozen "Honor Flights" to Washington DC so nearly 1,400 South Dakota WWII Veterans could visit their National Memorial created in honor of their service.

For more information, email to: HonorFlightSD@gmail.com or call 1-888-344-1945



CANTON TO BE CAPITAL FOR A DAY

Governor Dennis Daugaard has selected Canton, South Dakota to be South Dakota's "Capitol for a Day" on Wednesday, September 28.

Gov. Daugaard said. "It's an excellent opportunity for me to get better acquainted with the residents of Canton and more informed about local issues and the future of the Canton area."

The Governor and a small delegation of state officials will tour Canton, have a lunch meeting with business and community leaders, and conduct a community roundtable session. There will also be a constituent-outreach hour.

Capital for a Day at Canton will conclude with coffee with the Governor.



EMPLOYER APPRECIATION

Last week, the South Dakota National Guard showed their appreciation for employers of Guard members at several Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve employer appreciation events throughout eastern South Dakota.

The ESGR appreciation events were held at armories in Watertown, Brookings, Sioux Falls and Mitchell, and were a way for the National Guard to say thank you and recognize employers for the contributions and sacrifices they make by employing a Guard member.

"Never in the history of our Nation has our Guard been relied upon more than it is right now. If the Guardsmen are working harder than they have ever worked; and we are, then the employers are giving up more than they ever have," said Maj. Gen. Timothy Reisch, adjutant general of the South Dakota National Guard. General Reisch personally thanked the employers for their commitment to this nation, and noted that it shows great patriotism and selflessness to employ a Guardsmen or Reservists."

Employers are an important component to the Guard, as they allow Guard members the time off they need for annual training, state active duty missions or during a deployment overseas.

These appreciation events were especially held to recognize employers for giving Guard members time off to help with flood relief efforts in Pierre/Fort Pierre and Dakota Dunes areas.

General Reisch noted that at one time we had 1,300 Guardsmen on flood duty. South Dakota has not had a state active duty like this since the 1972 Rapid City flood.



MOUNT RUSHMORE TO BE ILLUMINATED 9/11

Mount Rushmore will remain illuminated through the night of Sept. 11 in remembrance of the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attacks.

The regular evening lighting ceremony will begin at 8:00 pm on September 11. The carving will remain illuminated until the sun rises on September 12.

Park rangers will be available all night, and the public is invited to visit the Shrine of Democracy anytime throughout the evening or night.

The National Park Service buildings and concession facilities will be closed during this time, but the parking gates will be left open after the evening program.



9/11 EVENTS TO BE HELD IN SOUTH DAKOTA

The Sioux Falls VA invites everyone to their 10th annual Patriot Day program. The program will be held at 12:00 noon on Sunday, September 11. Victor Waters, MDJD, the new chief of staff, will share his experiences working in an emergency room that day. Veterans, active military, Guard and Reserve, law enforcement officers, emergency medical personnel, firefighters, Red Cross and Salvation Army members will all be recognized and presented with a commemorative pin.

The "Never Forget 9/11 Memorial Blood Drive" will be held on Friday and Saturday, September 9-10, from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm at Dakota V-Twin in Spearfish (3123 East Fairgrounds Lp Rd.).

There will be a "Remembrance Ride" Sunday, September 11. The ride starts in the Spearfish Premier Bankcard parking lot (120 Industrial Drive). Registration begins at 10:00 am—departing at noon. The goal is 911 attendees. The ride will end at Easyriders Saloon in Sturgis. Proceeds go to the Spearfish Veterans Monument. Attendees are encouraged to bring donations for members of the 842nd Unit that will deploy in September.

In remembrance of the 10th anniversary of September 11, a formal program will be held Sunday, September 11, at 2:00 pm at the Downtown Holiday Inn City Center (100 W. Eighth Street). The program will be held in the International Room (main floor). NYPD First Responder LTN (ret.) William Dement is the featured speaker. The event also will include patriotic readings, and patriotic music performed by the 147th Army Band and area choirs. Attendees will also have the opportunity to view the "South Dakota's Fallen Heroes Banner" display from 10:00 am—6:00 pm.

CW2 Hans Gukeisen, PFC Sheldon Hawk Eagle, CW2 Scott Saboe, CPT Christopher Soelzer, SGT Dennis Morgan, SSG Cory Brooks, LCPL Jeremy Bohlman, LCPL Joseph Welke, PFC Gunnar Becker, SSG Jason Montefering, CW2 Paul Pillen, SPC Daniel Bartels, SFC Richard Schild, SSG Daniel Cuka, CPL Brett Lundstrom, SGT Jeremiah Boehmer, SPC Patrick Herried, SGT Allen Kokesh Jr., SSG Gregory Wagner, SSG Robb Roling, SSG Zachary Tomczak, 1LT Thomas Martin, CPL Tanner O'Leary, SRA Jonathan Vega Yelner, SPC Estell Turner, SSG Jeremy Vrooman, SSG LeRoy Webster, SSG Brian Berky, SGT Eduviges Guadalupe Wolf, SSG Shane Barnard, SGT Israel Paul O'Bryan, CPT Dale Goetz, SRA Michael Hinkle



9/11 NATIONAL REMEMBRANCE FLAG



With all of the 9/11 events around the country, many of you will see the “9/11 National Remembrance Flag” on display. Below is an overview of what the design of that flag represents:

The background:

- The blue on each side of the flag represents the color of the state flags for each state where a plane was downed - New York, Pennsylvania & Virginia.
The black in the center of the flag represents the sorrow we feel for the innocent lives lost from this tragedy: those on the planes, those working in the towers, the Pentagon, and the rescue workers who lost their lives during the rescue.

The stars:

- The stars represent the four planes that crashed and the innocent lives lost on those planes and in the buildings.
- The blue star represents the Pentagon & American Airlines Flight 77, and for the innocent passengers and the lives lost in the Pentagon.
- The two white stars represent each of the towers at the World Trade Center, American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175, the innocent passengers on those flights, the lives lost (both those in the buildings and the rescue workers) and those that survived.
- The red star represents United Flight 93 that crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, the innocent passengers, and those who sacrificed their lives to protect the loss of other innocent lives.
- The color of the stars (red, white & blue) is representation of our United States flag. All 4 stars are touching, as well as the two white stars to touch the blue in the flag - this represents our 'unity' in the United States.

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 10—451st Firefighters Activation Ceremony
September 11—Patriot Day
September 12—Honor Flight South Dakota Finale
September 16—Stand Down - Watertown
September 16—Retiree Appreciation Day/Luncheon—EAFB
September 20—Stand Down—Aberdeen
September 21—842nd Engineering Company Activation Ceremony
September 21—Stand Down—McLaughlin
September 22—Stand Down—Eagle Butte
September 23—Stand Down—Sioux Falls
September 28—Capitol for a Day—Canton
October 13—Stand Down—Rapid City
October 14-16—VABHHCS Women's Retreat
November 11—Grand Opening of Women of War Center

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